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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3942
INFO RUEHXC/ALL US CONSULATES IN MEXICO COLLECTIVE
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC
RUEABND/DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMIN HQ WASHINGTON DC
RHMFIUU/FBI WASHINGTON DC
RHMFIUU/HQ USNORTHCOM
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY 5017
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STATE PASS TO ONDCP - BRAD HITTLE

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TAGS: [KCRM](#) [SNAR](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [MX](#)

SUBJECT: NUEVO LEON LEADERS DISCUSS PUBLIC SECURITY CHALLENGES AHEAD

REF: A) MONTERREY 213 B) MONTERREY 297 C) MONTERREY 307

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¶1. (SBU) Summary. The annual Border Governors Conference which took place in Monterrey from September 2 - 4 offered the Ambassador and Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) Director Gil Kerlikowske multiple fora to examine the state of public security in Nuevo Leon. While the state government has worked in the past year to improve security, it has yet to achieve concrete results. On the contrary, many voices, public and private, continue to describe a deteriorating situation. While most called for increased resources and cooperation between agencies at all levels - including those of the US and Mexico - fundamental challenges remain in terms of diminishing the influence of the trafficking cartels over public institutions.

¶2. (SBU) In a bilateral meeting with the Ambassador and ONDCP Director Kerlikowske, Nuevo Leon Governor Jose Natividad Gonzalez Paras noted that the state still must do more to gain control over police forces. He explained that his government is working on plans to restructure the police and root out corruption, but that it was difficult to bring cultural change to organizations fundamentally resistant to it. He was hopeful that advanced training - in which 1400 officers at the federal and state level have participated thus far - would yield benefits. The Governor also expressed optimism that the integrated command and control centers now established in 11 different municipalities of the state would have an impact on organized crime. As he often does in meetings with US interlocutors, Governor Gonzalez Paras emphasized the importance of the USG stemming the flow of arms and cash to Mexican drug cartels from U.S. sources.

¶3. (SBU) At a separate meeting with Nuevo Leon's Citizen's Advisory Committee on Public Security, Committee Chair Carlos Juaregui (an NGO representative) told the Ambassador and Director Kerlikowske that citizen initiatives to root out corruption among police forces would have a noticeable impact within two years. He referred in particular to planned mechanisms whereby local citizen councils would review police chiefs monthly; the results of such reviews would be published in local newspapers, with substandard performance leading to possible sanctions. He also described plans for penal reforms aimed at providing educational opportunities for minor offenders

with the hopes of preventing them from joining the ranks of organized crime during their incarceration.

¶4. (SBU) The Ambassador applauded the Committee's efforts, noting that the involvement of civil society is essential to the struggle to improve security. State and local law enforcement would need to be key players in the fight, he declared. Juaregui emphasized that reducing poverty was the true key to addressing security problems in Nuevo Leon. He pointed out that many municipal police earn salaries below the established poverty level. Finally, Juaregui echoed the need to stem the flow of arms and cash from the United States, amplifying that popular opinion in Nuevo Leon is that the USG is not doing enough achieve this.

¶5. (SBU) Perhaps the most candid voice in all of the discussions was that of the State Secretary of Public Security, Aldo Fasci Zuazua. In his meeting with the Ambassador, and ONDCP Director Kerlikowske, he pointed out that 25% of the officers who have undergone polygraph tests to screen for reliability failed (he was quoted in the leading local daily "El Norte" the week prior as quantifying that number as in excess of 2,500). Fasci voiced his dismay that even officers who had passed this screening process had later been apprehended for connections to organized crime. Kerlikowske noted that the U.S. experience had been that talented police chiefs really could make a difference in establishing order. Fasci replied that few of the current crop of police chiefs actually had the needed expertise and training, resulting in a deficit in leadership and supervision. Accordingly, he felt it had been a mistake to share intelligence information with municipal police, in particular, because they too often passed such data to organized crime.

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¶6. (SBU) Fasci did advocate, however, sharing intelligence among other security agencies, such as the army and the federal and state police. He explained that the current task force concept helps to "depersonalize" the fight against organized crime, thereby reducing individual agents' exposure to retribution. Fasci discussed his hopes for even greater interagency cooperation once Nuevo Leon's Command, Control, Communication and Coordination Center (C5) became fully operational. The C5 will consolidate Nuevo Leon's current 96 separate emergency numbers into one number, and will host representatives of all law enforcement agencies in order to facilitate coordination and the sharing of intelligence. It will possess interactive screens which will track security events coded by color on a projected map, as well as the location of security patrols via uploaded GPS information. The latter information, he added, may help supervisors fight corruption by alerting them to patrols outside their assigned routes or spending a suspicious amount of time in any particular location.

¶7. (SBU) Comment. While Fasci's successor - a new gubernatorial administration takes office in Nuevo Leon on October 4 - could establish sophisticated protocols within the C5 to compartmentalize intelligence, there is a wider question if even this will be enough given the level of infiltration witnessed among all police agencies in Nuevo Leon (reftel A). As Fasci's public warning regarding growing rogue behavior on the part of police forces indicates, the "Command and Control" function of the C5 is already much in question; many members of the local community fear that information shared at the C5 will ultimately be used to the benefit of organized crime.

18. (SBU) Comment continued. Understood in all of these meetings was the need for more resources to implement reform. While most officials voiced gratitude for the Merida Initiative, some said that the assistance provided to date, especially to the state and local governments, had been insufficient to make a difference. As current economic conditions have resulted in falling budget revenues and increased debt at all levels of government, it is unclear where the resources will be found to employ more professional and better paid police forces. Barring that eventuality, it is difficult to see how any of the proposed reforms can gain traction in the fight against organized crime.

End Comment.
GRANDFIELDM